

You shall not hate your brother in your heart; you shall reprove your fellow and do not bear a sin because of him. (19:17)

Maase avos siman labanim, “The actions of the fathers are a sign/portent for their sons.” *Chazal* teach that, when the Patriarchs acted, the manner in which they acted, the consequences of their actions, the situations which they encountered, the challenges which they experienced, are all *simanim*, signs, for us, their children, to follow, to emulate, to study and remember. We must derive a lesson from their responses, so that we are prepared when a similar situation confronts us.

Yaakov *Avinu* had issues with three of his sons, whom he rebuked shortly before his death: Reuven, Shimon and Levi. Likewise, Moshe *Rabbeinu* endured tribulations from the descendants of these *Shevatim*, Tribes. Dassan and Aviram, who were Moshe’s constant nemeses, were descendants of Reuven, while Korach, who impugned the integrity of Moshe’s leadership, was a scion of Levi. The apple falls not far from the tree, and, while their sins were relative to the period in Jewish history in which they lived, they nonetheless are recorded in history as despots who sought to derail Moshe’s leadership.

Rebuke is a requisite in a relationship. If one really cares, he will point out his friend’s failing in a respectful, diplomatic and caring fashion. One who overlooks his friend’s shortcomings may one day be haunted by his regret over not calling to attention an action that could have been circumvented.

The first place in the Torah in which we observe a case of rebuke is when Yosef related to his father, Yaakov *Avinu*, what he felt were his brothers’ misdeeds. Yosef thought that, when he brought this information to his father’s attention, Yaakov would immediately react and rebuke his sons – thereby preventing any further misconduct. He was wrong. Our Patriarch did not recoil the way Yosef wanted him to react. Yaakov understood his sons’ behavior far better than Yosef did.

Actually, when one peruses the Biblical narrative, we note that there is historical precedent for --and pathology behind-- Yaakov and Yosef’s reactions.

Horav Aryeh Leib Heyman, zl, observes that, when Yaakov was growing up in the home of his parents, Yitzchak *Avinu* and Rivkah *Imeinu*, he too, encountered a sibling whose activities left much to be desired. Yaakov lived with Eisav for sixty-three years before he was compelled to leave due to his intervention concerning the blessings. During this period, Eisav acted like Eisav, an uncouth personality coupled with unbridled evil. He put on a show of sham piety when he presented himself to his father. His mother and brother were not fooled by his actions. They were acutely aware of his two-faced behavior. Why did Yaakov not share his knowledge of Eisav’s profligate behavior with his father?

Rav Heyman attributes Yaakov's reluctance to none other than his mother. Apparently, Rivkah was fully aware that Eisav was evil, yet, she chose to remain silent. Why? She conjectured that, if it were to be necessary for Yitzchak to be made aware of his son's miscreancy, Hashem would have informed him. If the Almighty was silent, what right did she have to speak? Indeed, a similar reaction was had by Yitzchak after Yosef's sale. He was aware of the entire debacle, but she did not inform his son, Yaakov. Why? He said, "If Hashem did not tell him (Yaakov), should I?" Nonetheless, being a Matriarch, Rivkah was aware of what it meant to raise children. She understood that it was not Yaakov's place either to rebuke Eisav, or to inform on him to their father.

Rachel *Imeinu* was an entirely different story. She died when her older son was but eight years old. As a result, this young orphan lost out on two fronts. First, he had no mother with whom he could share his fears, doubts, goals in life. She was gone, and, while Yosef had a loving father in Yaakov, he did not have Rachel, his mother. Second, his father loved him so much that he probably spoiled him because he was a *yasom*, orphan. Yaakov had a multi-colored coat made for Yosef. This, too, demonstrated to the young boy that the door to his father's heart was open for him. Thus, Yosef, who had originally sought to reprove his brothers himself, went instead to his father. It was downhill after that.

This is a powerful explanation of the events that occurred in the *Chumash*. It also gives an insight into parenting. There is no question that Yaakov had known what he was doing when he gave Yosef the *kesones pasim*, multi-colored coat. Yosef deserved it for a number of reasons. Until now, we thought that this garment had been the proverbial last straw on the camel's back. We now have a different angle for viewing the relationships among Yosef and Yaakov and the brothers. Yosef was a young orphan who had no one in whom to confide. Naturally, he turned to his father. It was not that Yosef was a "tattletale"; rather, he was deeply concerned about his brothers' behavior, and, left bereft of his mother, he had no one else. He went to his father – and this appears to be the "rest of the story."